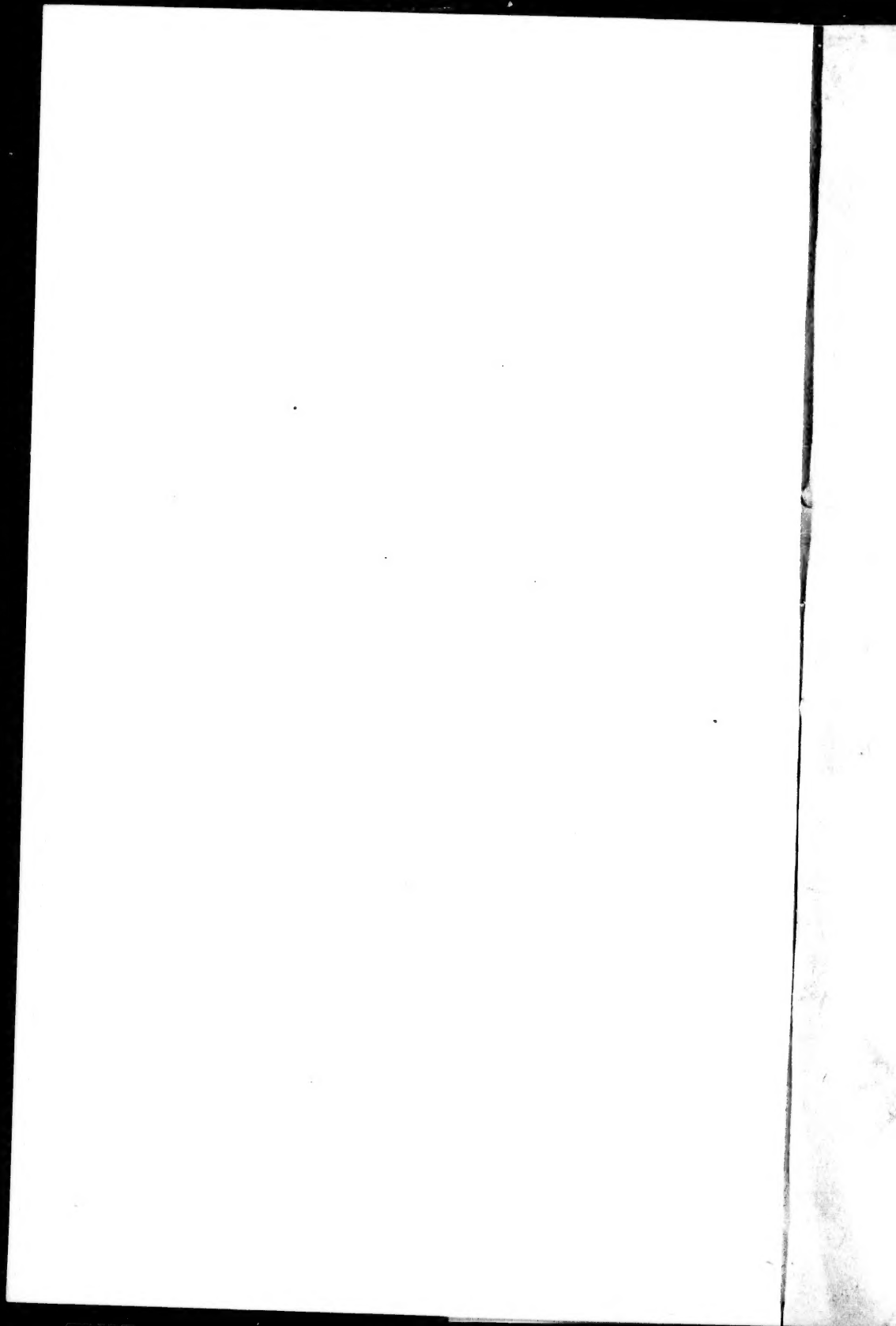




OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

Marchant, Printer, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street, London.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

REPORTS

OF THE

SELECT COMMITTEES

OF

BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,

ON THE SUBJECTS OF THE

TIMBER TRADE

AND

COMMERCIAL RESTRICTIONS;

IN WHICH ARE POINTED OUT

The Real Bearings of those Questions on the Shipping and Manufacturing Interests of the Kingdom, and the Great Importance of the Trade with the North American Colonies as compared with that to Norway and Sweden.

ALSO

Some Remarks on Canada and the United States,

AND THE

TRADE BETWEEN THOSE COUNTRIES AND THE WEST
INDIA COLONIES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. M. RICHARDSON, 23, CORNHILL,
OPPOSITE THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1820.

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OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

At a period when the legislature has been called upon, by numerous bodies of merchants and manufacturers, to remove nearly all the restrictions and prohibitions by which our mercantile system has been hitherto carried on, and when the principles of political economy are sought to be applied in the broadest manner to our navigation and commerce, without almost considering, whether the other nations of the earth have any similar or other regulations, equally deviating from those principles ; I have felt it a duty to make some observations on the Report of the Select Committees of both Houses of Parliament, to whom those petitions were referred, to show, that however just and true the modern principles of political economy may be in the abstract, their application to our navigation, commerce, and

manufactures, can only be beneficial, when made to bend to the various artificial and embarrassing systems of other countries, and when so shaped as to meet those adverse duties and restrictions, in the mode the most profitable to ourselves and the least irksome and disagreeable to the various people with whom we have to deal. Those, therefore, who throw out the signal for free trade, and the universal adoption of the principles of modern political economy, as the panacea for all our ills, should consider, whether it is not cruel, thus to raise false hopes and to delude our artisans and smaller manufacturers (well knowing that this country, owing to its heavy burthens, is in no condition materially to alter its duties and prohibitions, and that the maintenance of its independence, requires a moderate protection to our agriculture and the security of our naval power), and whether it be prudent, as regards foreign nations, to hold out any greater relaxation of our general system than the peculiar circumstances of our country will permit, but honestly to declare our wish to adopt the most liberal policy in our commercial intercourse with foreign states, that a just regard to those circumstances will allow.

The reports made to the two Houses of Parliament, from the Select Committees, for extending and securing the foreign commerce of the country, to whom were referred the petitions of

the merchants of London, &c. when made known to the public, will excite not a little surprise, as well for what they recommend, as for what they do not recommend. That of the Lords, being confined to the timber trade, to which the immediate attention of Parliament must be directed, and being very important in itself, I shall begin with, and make my remarks in the order, as the observations occur in the Report. It states "The
 " encouragement afforded to the importation of
 " wood from the British Colonies in North Ame-
 " rica, by the imposition of heavy duties on wood
 " from foreign states, is of comparatively recent
 " date, and does not appear to have formed a
 " part of the commercial or colonial policy of the
 " country previous to the late war. Till the
 " year 1809, little or no duty had been imposed
 " upon the various species of timber; in that and
 " the succeeding year, however, the nature of our
 " political relation with the Baltic powers led
 " to an apprehension, that great difficulty might
 " be found in deriving the usual supplies of tim-
 " ber from that quarter, not only for the general
 " purposes of domestic use, but more particularly
 " for the purpose of ship building.

" It was however, known, that timber in any
 " quantity, although of an inferior quality, might
 " be obtained in the British Colonies in North
 " America. But this being a new branch of

“ trade, and exposed to some risk and uncertainty, it was deemed expedient to give the Canadian wood the advantages not only of an exemption from all duty, on such as was fit for naval purposes, and of a duty little more than nominal upon all other descriptions, but also of considerable increase of duty on wood from the North of Europe.

“ High permanent duties, and a temporary war duty, were accordingly imposed upon all descriptions of wood imported from foreign countries by the 49 Geo. III. c. 98, which were doubled by the 50 Geo. III. c. 77; and these were afterwards partially increased by the 51 Geo. III. c. 93, and by the 52 Geo. III. c. 117, and a duty of 25 per cent. upon the whole of the permanent duties, was added by the 53 Geo. III. c. 33.

“ The several duties aforesaid were afterwards arranged and consolidated by the 59 Geo. III. c. 52; and a schedule, taken from the said act, of the details of the existing duties on all descriptions of wood imported from foreign countries, is annexed to this Report.

“ The Committee have been informed, by those of his Majesty's ministers who are members of the Committee, that the Canadian merchants were never led to believe that any of these duties would be permanent; an expectation

“ was however held out, that the duty of £2: 1s.
 “ first imposed, would be continued for some
 “ considerable time; but no such expectation
 “ was fairly raised with respect to the war duty
 “ and the duty imposed in 1813, and the exemp-
 “ tion from duty on Canadian timber has always
 “ been temporary, and will, unless renewed by
 “ Parliament, expire in July, 1820, although the
 “ parties have been given to understand, that it
 “ may be further continued till March, 1821.
 “ This view of the subject has been constantly
 “ explained to the Canadian merchants in various
 “ communications, to which this question has
 “ led between them and the Board of Trade.”

Whatever representations may have been made to individual merchants by members of the Board of Trade, can be known only to themselves; but that the colonists and the public at large were not led to entertain any other idea than that the duties would be permanent, so far as to secure at least one half of the supply to them, the following extract from the Parliamentary debates, and particularly the speech of the late Right Hon. G. Rose in the House of Commons, when he introduced the measure, will show.

“ House of Commons, Tuesday, May 22, 1810.

“ (*Foreign Timber and Shipping.*)—Mr. Rose
 “ moved the order of the day for the House re-

“ solving itself into a Committee, to consider of
 “ the propriety of increasing the duty on the im-
 “ portation of foreign timber, &c. He then stated
 “ to the Committee, that the object to which he
 “ had to call the attention of the Committee was
 “ of very great importance. It was, that by
 “ adopting the policy of laying a heavy additional
 “ duty on the timber imported from the north of
 “ Europe, they might encourage the importation
 “ of that essential article from our own colonies
 “ in North America. The price of timber in
 “ the north of Europe had, within these few years,
 “ risen to an enormous extent; no less indeed
 “ than 300 per cent. Another disadvantage at-
 “ tending this trade was, that in the present state
 “ of Europe the timber was brought to us, not by
 “ British, but by foreign ships; and this to such
 “ a degree, that he believed there was paid last
 “ year between 2 and £3,000,000 to foreigners
 “ alone for the freightage of timber imported to the
 “ amount of 358,000 tons. He believed that one
 “ half of the timber necessary for our consump-
 “ tion might be procured from our own colonies
 “ in North America, which, with the pines of
 “ Canada, would nearly supply the whole; and
 “ even if it fell short of his expectations, the
 “ country would be *compensated for the loss by*
 “ *other advantages.* The system now in use en-
 “ couraged not only the building of foreign ships,

“ but the formation of foreign sailors ; and by
 “ the measure he now had to propose, he trusted
 “ a change would be wrought, by which, in-
 “ stead of twice that number of seamen, trained
 “ for Denmark and Russia to be employed
 “ against us by our enemies, about 15,000 would
 “ be created for ourselves. The measure would,
 “ besides, encourage our colonies. It would
 “ enable them to clear their grounds of timber,
 “ and induce the cultivation of flax, hemp, &c.
 “ for our importation. In return, the colonies
 “ would be enabled to take our manufactures,
 “ instead of our being obliged to send out for
 “ their timber, as we now did, our ships in bal-
 “ last. The principle of his proposition was not
 “ new ; it was as old as the days of Queen Anne.
 “ He adverted to an extraordinary and ill-judged
 “ assertion, advanced by a Noble Lord (Cochrane)
 “ on a former night, that there was not timber
 “ enough in Plymouth dock-yard to build one
 “ half of a seventy-four. He regretted the Noble
 “ Lord could have been so hasty, and recom-
 “ mended him more caution in making such
 “ unguarded assertions for the future. The tim-
 “ ber now in Plymouth dock-yard was out of
 “ all proportion greater than that specified by
 “ the Noble Lord. Upon all these considerations
 “ he trusted the Committee would concur with
 “ him in the Resolution—

“ To lay an additional duty on oak, wainscot,
 “ &c. imported under any shape from the north
 “ of Europe, and all timber not imported by the
 “ East India Company, or directly from our own
 “ colonies in North America.

“ Sir W. Lemon said a few words in favour of
 “ the Resolution.

“ Mr. Horner rose, to call the earnest attention
 “ of the House, not so much to the present Reso-
 “ lution as to the alarming increase of foreign
 “ shipping in our trade, thus incidentally brought
 “ under their eye on the present occasion. The
 “ Right Hon. Gentleman had stated, that last year,
 “ for the freightage of timber alone to the extent
 “ of 380,000 tons, this country had paid to fo-
 “ reigners the sum of from 2 to £3,000,000; and
 “ on a former evening, an Hon. Gentleman, well
 “ acquainted with trade, on the subject of the
 “ marine insurance, had informed them that not
 “ less than £10,000,000 was paid the same year
 “ for the whole foreign freightage. This he
 “ considered as an alarming increase of foreign
 “ shipping, entirely subversive of our maritime
 “ system. He again then entreated the House
 “ to take into their serious consideration this
 “ new and growing evil, which, in his opinion,
 “ arose altogether out of the mercantile system,
 “ so much the favourite of the Right Hon. the
 “ Chancellor of the Exchequer. Of this system,

" so persevered in, Buonaparte might be taking
 " the advantage, and, like Cromwell, who, by
 " diverting the trade from the Dutch, became
 " the carrier and first maritime power of Eu-
 " rope, he might be deluding our government,
 " by pretending a total disregard to commerce,
 " while, in fact, even in the midst of war, by our
 " own connivance, he was creating seamen to
 " man his fleets against us ; for he could at any
 " time transfer to his service these men thus em-
 " ployed in a neutral trade, of powers immedi-
 " ately under his controul. If he exercised his
 " genius, as he was well able to do in this way,
 " he would be playing a deep game, and deluding
 " us by taking advantage of our own ill-judged
 " policy.

" Mr. Rose, in reply, stated, that so far from
 " encouraging foreign shipping, the Board of
 " Trade never in one instance swerved from this
 " principle, never to admit a foreign ship to go
 " where a British ship could be employed. The
 " Hon. Gentleman talked of their being deluded ;
 " but how was this ? It was by the strong hand
 " of Buonaparte, which procured the exclusion of
 " British shipping from the ports of the north of
 " Europe. The question then was, whether, by
 " accepting neutral carriage, where no other
 " could be used, they were to carry on an im-

" portant trade? or, by rejecting this means,
 " were to shut the door on their exports, and
 " starve their manufacturers? It was a conso-
 " lation to know, that, under all the disadvan-
 " tages imposed by the enemy, our own shipping
 " had increased in value. As a proof of this, he
 " instanced a vessel, bought three years ago for
 " £2700, now selling at £6000.

" Mr. D. Giddy considered it as a matter of
 " general policy to encourage trade with our own
 " colonies. The argument of Buonaparte's
 " treading in the steps of Cromwell was an
 " additional reason for approving of the proposed
 " measure. He had heard, however, that the
 " timber from North America was not adequate
 " for our national purposes, and also that the
 " quantity could not be so great as the Right
 " Hon. Gentleman expected, or the uses of the
 " country required.

" The Chancellor of the Exchequer rose to
 " endeavour to dissipate the gloomy apprehen-
 " sions expressed by the Hon. Gentleman oppo-
 " site, and those which his speech might have ex-
 " cited as to the commercial state of the country.
 " There were, doubtless, a great many foreign
 " ships employed in our trade to the various
 " ports of the north of Europe, as it was impos-
 " sible to carry on trade with those places in
 " English ships. His Right Hon. Friend, there-

fore, was obtaining a supply of timber from our
 own colonies, that foreign ships might not be so
 much encouraged. The Hon. Gentleman op-
 posite must therefore think the plan he proposed
 most wise, as it went to counteract that evil of
 which he had complained. If foreign ships had
 been much employed trading to the north of
 Europe, British vessels had been employed
 instead of others in the trade to South America
 and to the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, so
 that if there were an increase of foreign ton-
 nage in one quarter, there was an increase of
 British tonnage in another. In 1807 the ton-
 nage of British vessels coming inward amount-
 ed to 8590 tons; in 1809 the amount was
 10,173 tons, having increased 1583 tons. The
 tonnage of foreign ships employed in 1807
 amounted to 3702; in 1809 its amount was
 4682, having increased since 1807 by 980.
 Thus it appeared that there was an increase of
 the tonnage of foreign vessels employed in our
 trade of 980 tons, while the increase of British
 tonnage amounted to 1583 tons. From this it
 must appear that all the advantage was not on
 the side of foreign vessels, but that the increase
 of their tonnage arose from the general increase
 of trade. The tonnage of the English vessels
 cleared out in 1807 was 8924 tons; in 1809 it

“ was 9935 tons: that of foreign vessels cleared
 “ out in the former year was 3630; in the
 “ latter, 4370. Hence it would be obvious
 “ that the increase of the tonnage of foreign
 “ vessels was 740 tons, while that of the Eng-
 “ lish vessels cleared out amounted to 1011; so
 “ that the increase of the trade carried on in
 “ English vessels was greater in proportion than
 “ the increase of that carried on by means of fo-
 “ reign shipping.

“ Mr. Tremayne was apprehensive that the
 “ American timber was not fit for all the pur-
 “ poses to which this country would wish to
 “ apply her importations of that article, and we
 “ would therefore be at a loss for our necessary
 “ supplies, were a heavy duty, amounting to a
 “ prohibition, to be laid on that procured from
 “ the north of Europe.

“ Mr. Baring objected to the system of trade
 “ favoured by ministers, as tending to prefer the
 “ northern neutrals, which were, in fact, our
 “ enemies, to the American shipping, in the trade
 “ to Norway and the Baltic. That trade might
 “ much better be carried on under the American
 “ flag; but for this really neutral power had been
 “ substituted pretended neutrals, who might be
 “ instantly converted into enemies, and we were
 “ consequently, by this course, enriching a part

" of the world it was least our interest to enrich.
 " This was the great error of the present system—
 " the encouragement of the northern powers in-
 " stead of America. With regard to the measure
 " itself, he feared our colonies would neither pro-
 " duce a sufficient quantity of timber, nor that of
 " sufficient quality. It would, besides, give the
 " western part of the kingdom an advantage over
 " the eastern, as the former would be supplied
 " from America, and the latter from the Baltic.
 " It would also increase the price of a necessary
 " article, already enormously high. The object
 " was, however, a great one, and the experiment
 " might, perhaps, deserve to be tried."

No more, I flatter myself, need be said as to the
 permanency of the system held out by government.
 On the justness of Mr. Rose's remarks, and their
 exact accomplishment, I shall remark by and bye.
 The Committee then divide their observations
 into four heads:—the first, on the comparative
 qualities of timber from the north of Europe and
 from the British North American colonies; and
 their remarks on that subject are perfectly unne-
 cessary, as the qualities were well known, even
 according to their own report, when the first
 duties took place, and it never was intended to
 exclude the timber of the northern powers, but
 by admitting about one half of each; that from

the colonies might be applied to an infinite number of purposes, for which it answers just as well as the other, and, by raising a competition against the European timber, one of Mr. Rose's objects has been attained—that of forcing them to sell their timber at a reasonable price, in place of laying 300 per cent. on the cost; and which is an answer to the Committee's second observation, respecting cheapness, and proves that we are indebted for its cheapness, in the north of Europe, to the competition raised, by bringing the American timber into the market, and we have no other security for its continuance at a reasonable rate, but by persevering in the beneficial system of the duties.

The next two heads of observation embrace the merits of the whole case, and are as follows:—
 3d, “ the direction which the system of duties
 “ has given to the commerce and consumption of
 “ the country, as far as respects the article of
 “ wood.” 4th. “ The probable effect which any
 “ material deviation or alteration of these duties
 “ might be expected to produce on the consumption of the country, on its trade with Europe
 “ and with the colonies, and on the particular
 “ interests concerned.”

So long as the public has a choice of wood from the north of Europe and from Canada, it

need not be matter of complaint that the timber of the latter has got more into use, in consequence of the continuance of the duties. It has been clearly proved, that its qualities are well known, and, therefore, the Committee need not be alarmed that the public, having the choice of a better article, should still, for various purposes, give it a preference;—that is a question which may be safely left to the public: there is no danger of their continuing to buy an article, which, on trial, is found unfit for the uses to which it is applied; the importation, in that case, would cease, without the interference of government. The fact is, it is admirably adapted for various important purposes, where lightness and ease of workmanship are required; and, as the Committee profess to have the interests of commerce in view, they must be promoted by having a cheap wood for packages, of which, perhaps, one million are used throughout the kingdom, in the course of the year, and which cannot, on an average, be estimated at less than ten feet of deal each, which alone must take off an immense quantity. If the Committee had called any of the ship-carpenters on the Thames, they would have learned, that there is not a stick of timber from the British North American colonies used in ship building, except for masts and yards; and as it is highly

beneficial to commerce to have this cheap wood for the purposes to which it is applied, those interests cannot be better promoted, than by keeping the timber trade on its present footing, with, perhaps, a slight alteration, to make deals pay according to their entire contents, or even a small additional duty on foreign deals, to favour British and colonial labourers in that article.

The grand points now remain to be considered ;—the effect which the encouragement given to the importation from the British colonies has had on our manufactures and shipping, as compared with those of Norway and Sweden ; for it appears the trade with Russia and Prussia has increased, the former very much. It appears from the beginning to have been a favourite object with the Committee to get the duties removed at all events ; and for that purpose they state that the demand for wood from the countries in the north of Europe has been progressively diminishing, so as to occasion great interruption to the trade with these countries, particularly with Norway, whose inhabitants, notwithstanding the predilection they have uniformly shown for British manufactures, are not only left without the means of consuming them, but of paying for those they have received ; and in another place they say—“ There can be little

"doubt, that any material diminution of the duties on foreign timber would almost immediately lead to an increased demand of that article for most purposes of building, and enable the countries which produce it, but more especially Sweden and Norway, very greatly to increase their consumption of British produce. As this circumstance, however, could not take place without diminishing the demand for colonial timber, it must in some degree affect the profits of the capital now vested in saw-mills, &c. in Canada to the amount of £100,000 or £150,000. It could not be considered as directly affecting the interests of the Canadian landholder, &c." So that, from this reasoning, we are to understand the Committee to be of opinion, that, to encourage the consumption of our manufactures by Norway and Sweden, the duties are to be taken off, though gradually, and thus nearly to exclude the timber of the colonies, only occasioning a loss of £150,000 to those engaged in saw-mills, and little affecting the landholder in Canada, and probably throwing 8 or 10,000 British seamen, and a proportionate quantity of shipping, out of employment.

Before I proceed to point out the impolicy and absurdity of such reasoning, I shall just beg the reader to refer to Mr. Rose's and the

other speeches already quoted, when he introduced the subject of the duties, and to reflect for a moment on the different feelings of the parties; the first in a state of war, and the Select Committee in profound peace. I submit, that the observations of the Select Committee are not borne out by the accounts annexed to their own Report; and that the importation of timber and deals from the North of Europe has not declined more than was contemplated by Mr. Rose when he introduced the system of the duties; and that the decrease of importation from Norway and Sweden has been mainly owing (according to Mr. Borthwick, one of the most intelligent witnesses examined by the Committee) to the duty on deals being charged by the hundred of deals instead of the cubic contents; and those of Norway being of small size, the merchants have resorted, more than formerly, to those markets where the large sized deals are to be had, viz. the Baltic ports of Russia and Prussia.

The following extracts from accounts annexed to the Select Committee's Report will clearly prove that a fair proportion of the timber imported into this country, both for the last year and for an average of the last six years, has come from the North of Europe, and that it has not been deficient in quantity, though it may have been unproductive in price to the shippers:—

From the Year 1814 to 1819.

	Timber. Loads.	Deals and Battens. C.		Timber. Loads.	Deals. C.
Russia ..	82,426	71,906	Canada	143,408	21,512
Prussia ..	355,323	20,226	N. Brunswick	589,060	2,020
Sweden ..	70,641	30,318	Nova Scotia	122,710	558
Norway ..	145,055	87,063	P. Edw. Isle	47,796	338
			Newfind & } C. Breton }	1,409	51
Six years	653,445	218,513			
Average	108,907	36,418	Six years	904,383	24,475
			Average	150,730	4,079

For the Year 1819.

	Timber. Loads.	Deals. C.		Timber. Loads.	Deals. C.
Russia ..	11,372	12,140	Canada	57,061	9,331
Prussia ..	58,740	4,746	Nova Scotia	32,346	99
Sweden ..	7,974	6,403	N. Bruns.	159,768	643
Norway ..	24,750	16,048	P. Edw. Isle	17,335	152
			Cape Breton	459	—
	102,836	39,337	Newfoundl.	96	—
				267,065	10,225

Thus it appears, from some accidental causes, that the quantity of pine timber imported last year from the British North American colonies was unusually large, and the ordinary consequence has followed,—a considerable loss to the parties concerned; which has much reduced the

quantity this year, and what is nothing more than what happens in every other trade, to be occasionally overdone. But whilst we notice the quantity of timber from the colonies to exceed that imported from the North of Europe, on an average of the last six years, we must particularly observe, that the quantity of deals and battens imported from the North of Europe, for the same period of six years, is nearly ten times as great as the quantity received during the same period from the colonies; and even last year, the greatest of importation that was ever known from the colonies, the quantity of deals and battens from the North of Europe was still nearly four times as great; so that, combining the quantities of timber and deals, it is clear the colonies have not had more than the share which it was originally intended they should have in this trade; and whilst, on an average of six years, the quantity of deals imported from the North of Europe is nearly ten times as great as that imported from the colonies, it must strike every one, who has British interests at heart, with astonishment, to hear a Committee of Parliament gravely recommend measures for the destruction of the property vested in the saw-mills, which produce that tenth. In order to form a fair, just, and correct opinion of the value of any trade to Norway and Sweden, it is necessary to look not only at what the actual state of

the imports and exports are to the countries in the North of Europe and to the British American colonies, but also to what they have been in times past, and to what extent they may be reasonably expected to reach in future, and to consider also their respective stability and probable permanency. According to Anderson's History of Commerce, the imports from and exports to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were as follows:—

Denmark and Norway.

		Imports.					Exports.		
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
1700	—	58,773	9	10	—		44,695	8	1
1710	—	60,852	7	0	—		31,571	8	11
1720	—	112,263	8	1	—		129,674	0	4
1730	—	95,715	10	3	—		51,494	12	7
1740	—	89,496	19	3	—		70,536	0	1
1750	—	90,273	8	3	—		78,052	5	8
1760	—	58,745	10	10	—		108,627	3	0
1770	—	76,898	17	2	—		167,257	4	11
1781	—	94,689	1	10	—		172,012	19	9

Sweden.

		Imports.					Exports.		
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
1700	—	190,509	18	5	—		70,806	19	2
1710	—	173,585	10	2	—		27,620	3	7
1720	—	191,352	5	11	—		111,555	7	4
1730	—	191,022	15	7	—		15,271	11	11
1740	—	180,839	17	1	—		15,557	14	5
1750	—	187,022	9	1	—		16,162	2	7
1760	—	193,340	2	5	—		13,657	13	0
1770	—	136,616	6	0	—		58,576	4	8
1781	—	212,414	19	11	—		62,510	8	0

During a part of last war, large exportations were made to Denmark and Sweden, for the purpose of being introduced, through those countries to the continent, the ports of which were shut to our flag and manufactures by Buonaparte's decrees; and in 1810 property to the amount of some millions was seized in Sweden, and the greater part of it ultimately lost to the merchants and underwriters of this country; and it therefore must be unnecessary, with a view to the question we are discussing, to state the exportations during the war. Since the peace, the exportations to Norway for the last six years, as given in the Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee, average £119,335 : 11 : 10, of which nearly one half is foreign and colonial produce; and the exports to Sweden, for the same six years, average £344,860 : 11 : 3, and of which more than one half is colonial and foreign produce. The average export of British manufactures to Norway and Sweden both, for the last six years, does not much exceed £200,000 per annum; and, by reference to the extracts just given from Anderson's History of Commerce, the whole exports of 1720, just a hundred years ago, including Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, were £240,000. The barrenness of the soil, in Norway and Sweden, must ever keep down the population; and as they have nothing to offer in

exchange but wood and iron, any material extension of trade with them is physically impossible. During the last six years it appears, from the tables of the Report of the Select Committee, that the imports from Norway and Sweden have been made in the proportion of three foreign tons of shipping to one of British, viz.

		British.	Foreign.
		Tons.	Tons.
1814	{ Denmark }	17,394	50,872
	{ Norway }		
	{ Sweden.... }	27,986	64,874
1815	{ Denmark }	23,329	150,044
	{ Norway }		
	{ Sweden.... }	17,381	67,242
1816	{ Denmark }	14,624	33,492
	{ Norway }		
	{ Sweden.... }	11,949	15,263
1817	{ Norway .. }	22,580	52,713
	{ Sweden.... }	20,319	19,579
1818	{ Norway .. }	21,996	85,984
	{ Sweden.... }	23,343	25,718
1819	{ Norway .. }	17,087	82,689
	{ Sweden.... }	21,988	20,165

The Norwegians cannot now pay what they owe us; and unless you, from motives of humanity, give them a higher price for the first cost of their timber than the fair competition of the market will permit, it will probably be a long time before they will be able: but as a matter of trade, and as regards the permanent interests of this kingdom, the rights and claims of our manufac-

turers, of our seamen, of our colonies, of our ship-owners, all cry out against such a sacrifice. It is clear they have nothing but wood to offer you; and unless you pay them more for it, by taking off the duties, and removing the competition, they must continue to content themselves with the barest necessities of life: and, if you grant them the boon, the utmost you can possibly hope to add to the exportation of British manufactures to Norway and Sweden together would be £150,000 or £200,000, at the expense of interests infinitely more valuable, and which by you ought to be held sacred.

I shall now, therefore, show what those interests are which would be affected by the removal of these duties; and I flatter myself I shall put the case in so clear a light, as to satisfy every reflecting mind of the impolicy, inexpediency, and injustice of the measure. Whoever reads Mr. Rose's speech, when the duties were laid, must be struck with astonishment, that none of those who introduced the subject of their repeal into the House of Commons, as well as into the House of Lords,—neither Mr. Baring nor Mr. Robinson in the former, nor the Marquis of Lansdown or Lord Liverpool in the latter,—ever uttered one word as to the interest of the colonies in the question. It has indeed been attempted to be shown that the Canadian landholder has no in-

terest in the matter; and notwithstanding Mr. Ellice has stated that the landholder in Canada gets little for the pine timber, he admits the oak timber and staves are of greater importance and value, and that certainly some farmers employ part of their time in cutting wood during the winter. No person has been examined (Mr. Bainbridge being only an export merchant) on behalf of the farmers, who in fact are the chief and almost the sole landholders of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, although three-fourths of the pine timber for some years has come from these provinces. But it is admitted, that the landholder is interested in the value of the oak besides his labours during the winter; and the calculation given in by the Committee of the state of the timber trade in January, 1820, No. 8 in Appendix, has £1 : 5s. as first cost per load in Canada for white, and £2 : 5s. for red pine timber. Allow this to be divided between what are called woodcutters and farmers, the amount on the average of the timber imported for the last three years will be—

201,000 loads, at £1 : 5s.	£251,250
Add, for red pine, the price being £2 : 10s. . .	20,000
Deals	20,000
Oak timber and staves	50,000
To be divided between landholders, farmers, } and woodcutters.	<u>£341,250</u>

After such a statement, can it be said that the colonists are not interested in this trade. The annual loss to them, in cost and labour, would be clearly, from the accounts annexed to the Report of the Select Committee, £340,000; to say nothing of the capital in saw-mills, which is the least part of it. But who will calculate the loss which this country may sustain in good feeling and attachment by such unkind treatment? It is well known that in many, perhaps in most, instances, in clearing the land they burn the timber on account of the difficulty of carriage, and because it is but of late years that this country has encouraged them to ship it. Mr. Rose clearly held this out to them as a permanent resource; and have they no right to look to you for every facility in paying for their imports of your manufactures, amounting on an average of the last six years to £2,409,204 per annum, besides rum, sugar, &c. from the West India colonies, to the amount of £300,000 more, making altogether £2,709,204 sterling?

I will not suppose, that this country would hold such language to them as Mr. Rose's, when the enemy was at our gates, and after they had exposed their property for us to be burnt, and themselves to the sword; that then, when peace was made, and no external danger threatened, that we would turn round upon them, and deny

them all the reasonable advantages they have a right to expect from this trade at our hands, and confer it on those who are ever ready to join our enemies, confiscate our manufactures, and stop our supplies, when it suits their purpose. We have a monopoly of their trade, no other flag is unfurled for them, nor do they desire any other; only treat them with something like parental affection and a just reciprocity, and they will ever stand by us. So much for the interests which the colonists have in the question; I shall point out presently the interest which we have in promoting their prosperity.

Our shipping and seamen form the next most important interest, that would be affected by the measure of adopting such a scale of duties, as would deprive the colonists of a fair share of the supply of timber. It appears that the shipping employed in the trade with the British North American colonies, on an average of the last six years amounts to 202,747 tons, which, at the depreciated rate of shipping, is worth, £2,027,470. Now, the Select Committee should consider, that a British built ship is a British manufacture; that all the ships built in the river Thames are of English timber, with the single exception of the decks, which are of Dantzic or Memel deals; that of the first cost of the hull the wood forms about one-half of the value, and of that

half the foreign deals at the most one-sixteenth ; the remainder is composed of timber, perhaps from the estates of the Select Committee, with British labour and carriage added to the first cost ; the iron and copper, with copper sheathing, make one-fourth more, and the labour the other. It need not be mentioned that the sails, rigging, cables, and anchors, are British manufacture, and, with the masts, form an addition of a third more to the value of the hull.

Suppose the proposition of the Select Committee should be carried into effect, and that one half of the average number of ships in this trade, for the last six years, should be thrown out of employment, that number we may take at 100,000 tons, which at the present depreciated rate of shipping is worth £1,000,000. The calculation of those most conversant with the subject of the wear and tear of ships, is that they require, in the trade of the American or European seas, an average refit equal to ten per cent. per annum, which is clearly equal to a demand for British labour and manufactures to that amount, and half as much more to replace those which may be entirely lost, making together £150,000.

I think it will not be denied, that the active employment of this quantity of tonnage creates a demand for British labour and manufactures to that amount, exclusively of the beneficial interest

of the owners, who no doubt would derive a fair return for their reduced capital in these 100,000 tons of shipping, which probably cost them double; viz. £2,000,000 sterling.

I defy the Select Committee to point out any rational ground of hope, that the demand for our produce with Norway and Sweden can be permanently increased by £150,000 beyond its present amount, by any fair reciprocal trade; how then can the sacrifice of this valuable property be justified, which must be consigned to rot in our harbours, if the destructive views of the Select Committee be carried into execution, besides the loss which its employment created for British labour and manufactures, certainly equal to any increase to our exports that can be reasonably looked for, by giving up this valuable branch of trade entirely to Norway and Sweden? Along with this quantity of shipping, must be thrown out of employment at least five or six thousand seamen, many of whom, probably, have fought our battles, and many of whom we have seen very lately perishing in our streets; and although they cannot be included arithmetically, in the calculation of the loss which is likely to arise from the completion of the projects of the Select Committee, I will do that committee the justice to believe that they, as well as every other member of the legislature, will give the interests and welfare

of those valuable men their fullest consideration and their due weight in the decision of this important question.

I flatter myself, that, from the facts which I have stated and from what I have yet to offer, it will be manifest that the permanent interests and general prosperity of the empire, as involved in the interests of our colonies, of our manufacturers, of our ship-owners and seamen, will be best promoted by continuing the timber trade on its present footing, with perhaps a slight alteration to favour British labour rather than foreign, in sawing deals.

However true therefore in the abstract, as an axiom of political economy, that the interests of commerce are best promoted by getting the best article in the cheapest market, practically, as a general proposition, perhaps it cannot be applied with wisdom, but to societies in their infancy; so in the particular article of timber, the laws of the trade in regard to it cannot be regulated to the best advantage of the country, without viewing the whole bearings of the question, on all the other important interests with which it is connected; and above all, by the consideration, that if by any impolitic and unnatural conduct towards the colonies, we withdraw the encouragement from our own marine, and give the northern nations of Europe a monopoly of the supply, they

will, if not immediately, at no distant period again raise the price in the countries of its growth. They would also, in that case, probably carry off a considerable sum in specie, both for wood and freightage, and which, in the event of a bad harvest, might materially interfere with the arrangements of the Bank in resuming cash payments.

I now proceed to show the interest that we have in promoting the welfare and prosperity of the North American Colonies. It has been justly remarked by the Select Committee, that "it was not, till about the year 1809, when the country was likely to be deprived of a supply of timber from the North of Europe, that the importation of timber from British North America was adopted, as desirable, or as a part of our colonial policy." Whether a consideration of the reciprocal interests of the mother country and the colonies should have led the British government to have adopted it before, it may be needless now to discuss; it is but too true, that all the nations of Europe, and this nation among the rest, in their colonial regulations, have taken too confined and narrow a view of their own interests, as connected with their colonies, and a more striking example of this kind could hardly be produced, than the manner in which this subject has lately been brought under the notice of Parliament; on that subject, however, I shall not enlarge, but

enter on the more agreeable task of showing how closely our interests are blended with theirs, and as they advance in wealth and population, in the same degree must their demand upon our manufactures and produce be increased, and our mutual welfare be promoted.

The following extracts, from Anderson's History of Commerce, will show the progressive advance of our exports to the present North American Colonies.

	£	s.	d.
1700 Newfoundland	9,156	6	5
1710	11,874	8	7
1720	11,859	3	9
1730	21,725	3	9
1740	21,562	7	2
1750	44,867	11	6
— Nova Scotia	13,875	19	7
1760 Newfoundland.....	56,643	1	6
— Cape Breton.....	11,048	14	5
— Nova Scotia	52,767	2	2
— Quebec	51,629	18	5
	£172,088	16	6
1770 Newfoundland	89,394	1	7
— Canada	170,962	8	11
— Nova Scotia	51,581	12	8
	£311,938	3	2

	£	s.	d.
1773 Newfoundland	77,744	1	4
— Canada	310,807	19	6
— Nova Scotia	27,032	18	4
	<u>£421,644</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>2</u>

1782 Newfoundland	74,091	4	3
— Canada	422,807	13	6
— Nova Scotia	32,474	10	1
	<u>£529,373</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>

1785 Newfoundland	198,227	6	4
— Canada	267,384	14	9
— Nova Scotia	207,345	9	8
	<u>£672,957</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>

The subsequent, from accounts annexed to report of Select Committee.

1799 Canada	558,968	19	7
— Nova Scotia and New Brunswick ..	361,495	8	6
— Newfoundland	145,931	17	6
	<u>£1,066,396</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>

1809 Canada	974,006	8	0
— Nova Scotia	377,305	17	8
— New Brunswick	125,231	9	5
— Prince Edward's Island	16,117	19	8
— Newfoundland	241,015	12	7
	<u>£1,733,677</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>

Average exports of last six years, 1814 to 1819 inclusive, £2,409,204 per annum.

And the following, extracted from the same work, will show that the average exportations to the colonies which now compose the United States of America, for six years of the largest of exportations previous to the troubles which ended in the American war, amounted to £2,383,860 per annum.

	£	s.	d.
1773 Carolina.....	344,859	9	1
— Florida	51,502	7	2
— Georgia	62,932	19	8
— New England.....	527,055	15	10
— New York	289,214	19	7
— Pennsylvania	426,448	17	3
— Virginia and Maryland	328,904	15	8
	£2,030,919	4	3

	£
1768	2,188,090
1769	1,365,631
1770	1,965,428
1771	3,700,000
1772	3,053,093
1773	2,030,919

6)14,303,161 for six years.

£2,383,860 per annum.

So that from these accounts and those annexed to the report of the Select Committee, showing the exports to the present British North American colonies, for the last six years, the average of the British colonies exceeds that to the United States when colonies; the average of the exports to the latter being only £2,383,860, while those to the present colonies were £2,409,204 per annum.

Surely, after such a statement, it must be unnecessary to say one word on the high importance of these colonies to this country, and when we consider what their gradual advance has been, and that the best part of the country yet remains in a state of nature, and that our government has entirely neglected to improve the communication with the Lakes, it is not being too sanguine to expect that by a proper attention to the mutual relations between them and the Mother Country, and the colonies in the West Indies, the exports in ten years may be doubled, and will then amount in all probability, to what they now are to the United States of America. For this purpose, that fair share of the timber trade, which Mr. Rose contemplated, should be preserved to them by a continuance of the duties, and to that extent, I trust I have proved that the interests of commerce will be best promoted; and if our government be wise, it will avail itself of the present conduct of the government of the United

States, to secure to our own British North American Colonies, the supply of lumber and flour to our West India Colonies, for though the flour made in Canada, at present be hardly sufficient to supply all our islands, it is nearly so now, and in one or two years, it will be more than enough; and ten times more than sufficient may and will be made there, if government will do its duty, in improving the navigation to the Lakes: and this is one grand point, to which I now wish to call their attention, for I feel confident, if justice be done to Canada in this respect, the estimate I have formed is not too great of our exports being doubled in ten years; when they will on that supposition amount to £5,000,000 sterling.

Whoever will take the trouble of casting his eye over the map of the Lakes, will see an inland navigation extending over five immense bodies of water, navigable to vessels of any size, and the impediments to their free communication with each other being comparatively trifling. The lands on the borders of the Lakes Ontario and Erie, including the British and American shores, embrace of themselves an extent of coast, equal to twelve hundred miles.

On these two lakes, in a good climate between $41^{\circ} 30'$ and 44° north lat. are some of the richest lands in North America, and the natural debou-

chée for the produce of the whole of that fine country is through the St. Lawrence. The legislature of the state of New York, seeing the importance of the trade of so rich a district of country to their own state, about two years ago commenced a canal, to extend from Lake Erie to the Hudson, a distance of three hundred and fifty-three miles, and which will cost about five millions of dollars: the first year they cut seventy miles, and in two or three years more they will bring the produce of Lake Erie to the city of New York; and thus by the supineness of our government, they seek to deprive Canada of its natural advantages. The object on their part being a great national one, is both highly meritorious in itself and creditable to their spirit of enterprise and discernment. But what will be said of our government for not rendering the navigation complete between the Lakes and Montreal, when it is stated, that it would not be necessary to cut more than one tenth part of the distance the Americans have undertaken? and, if they adopted the width and depth of the American canal, the whole might be done at an expense of about £200,000. It appears, however, from the most recent accounts from Canada, that an incorporated company has begun to cut a canal to open the communication with Lake Ontario, and that the government of Canada have applied to his Majesty

for a grant of 100,000 acres of land, to enable them to make the cut to join Lake Erie with Lake Ontario.

I submit to his Majesty's ministers and the Select Committees of Parliament, appointed to secure and extend the foreign trade of the country, whether it be compatible with the dignity of the nation, with the interests of our commerce and manufactures, or with the welfare of the colonies and the peace and prosperity of all, that a few private individuals, incorporated or not incorporated, should be permitted to hold the key and line of communication between this country, and a navigation extending along a line of coast on the different lakes, of not less than four thousand miles, and which forms the boundary with a powerful and jealous rival state; and whether it be not the duty of his Majesty's government, to take upon itself the task of opening that navigation, in a manner worthy of the great commercial objects, which the rapid advance of those regions in wealth and population so loudly proclaim? In place of allowing individuals or the colony to complete the navigation on a small scale, at an expense of £200,000, to do it in an effectual manner, though at an expense of half a million or even a million. It is evident, the trade to the Illinois and the greater part of the American north-western territory, will chiefly take the direction of the Lakes,

and as the subject of a duty of transit may become a matter of serious consideration to our government, it behoves them therefore now, whilst they have it in their power, to give it that form which may be most conducive to the interests of this country and of the colony ; to weigh well all the circumstances which I have just mentioned, and having done so, I think it is impossible but they must come to the conclusion, that the navigation between the St. Lawrence and the Lakes ought to be a national undertaking. Possibly it may be practicable to make it navigable for ships of considerable burden, and that our ships may go without interruption from the Thames even to Lake Superior. A small transit duty on the produce of the United States, would soon repay the expense of the works, and let the colony have the use of it, free of charge.

The question, whether Canada will remain long subject to Great Britain, has been lately frequently discussed, and it appears to be one of easy solution. If we prove ourselves indifferent to their interests ;—if in war we create a trade with them, which in peace we wish to transfer to our mutual enemies ;—if we show them by our conduct that they are not considered as a part of our own family ;—if we say to Ireland, “ Your country and our’s are one ; not a yard of foreign linen shall be used here, and we will even give a bounty to induce foreigners to buy that of

your manufacture ;” but to the British North American colonies, “We hold you in subjection ; in war, it suited us to take your timber, because the northern countries of Europe raised the price of their’s 300 per cent. but since we have created a competition against them, they have again lowered it, and it now suits us better to take all our supply from them ; you shall continue to take two or three millions of our manufactures, but not a stick of your timber will we take in payment ; such part as you cannot pay for in furs or other produce on which we can make a large profit, you must remit in specie, the hard earnings of the sweat of your brow, and with that specie we will buy timber in Norway and Sweden ;”—if by any ill judged concessions to the United States, a decided preference be not given to the British North American colonies in the supply of our West India colonies ;—or if, by any illiberal or vexatious system of government, their internal prosperity and improvement be impeded ;—then, indeed, may they be expected, on the first opportunity that offers, to raise the standard of freedom, and then will be spread the flame of independence in the American hemisphere from pole to pole.

But from different treatment far different results may confidently be anticipated : if we show ourselves warmly alive to their interests ;—if we

continue to them in peace that reasonable share of the timber and colonial trade, to which necessity compelled us to resort in war, and show our determination to adhere to it, as well from motives of reciprocal justice and attachment, as from a sense of what our maritime strength requires;—if we prove to them that they are members of the same family, by so regulating our general policy, as to meet their views and interests as far as the general welfare of the empire will permit;—if we secure to them the trade to our West India colonies, to which they are justly entitled;—and, finally, if we send out as governors only men of tried prudence and moderation, but of liberal sentiments, who will in all things promote the reciprocal interests of the mother country and the colonies—then may we hope that the connexion between Great Britain and the Canadas will continue to the remotest generations.

I have now gone through the observations, which I felt it my duty to make on the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the timber trade: that report appears so pregnant with mischief to our maritime, our colonial, and our manufacturing interests, and appears so exactly adapted to restore that trade to the state from which Mr. Rose sought to relieve it, that the real bearings of the question cannot be too soon laid before the public.

It seems incredible, that the whole House of Commons should, in 1810, be so alarmed at the increase of foreign shipping and seamen, that, when it was stated that the freightage of timber alone amounted to 358,000 tons, it was unanimously thought desirable to divert part of that trade to our colonies, for the purpose of encouraging them and of creating British seamen; 15,000 of whom, it was contemplated might be employed in this trade. No sooner, however, are Mr. Rose's patriotic views fulfilled, almost to the letter, than a new light, in 1820, breaks in upon some members, who discover that it is not desirable to encourage British ships, British seamen, and British colonies, and I will add British manufactures too, to the prejudice of Norway and Sweden, although 141,929 tons of shipping entered inwards from those two countries last year, and of that quantity 102,854 tons were foreign; and if to that be added the foreign tonnage from Prussia, Russia, and Denmark, which amounted last year to 118,505 tons, it will not be found to be more reduced than the whole House of Commons in 1810 thought it prudent that it should be.

In looking at the general interests of navigation and the formation of seamen, we must also bear in mind that four American ships were employed in the trade between this country and the United

States, last year, for one British ship; the tonnage being 25,026 British, and 105,539 American. Add this American tonnage to the foreign tonnage from the north of Europe, and there is in those branches alone 326,898 tons of foreign freighting entered inwards last year.

A reference to Malthus's work on population, will satisfy any one of the impossibility, from the natural poverty of Norway and Sweden, of much increasing our exports to them; and the extracts I have made of those exports for a century, will prove their commerce to be as stationary as their population. More need not be said of the folly of sacrificing any valuable interests, with a view to any additional beneficial trade with such countries.

I have shown the gradual progression of our trade with the British North American colonies, and that our present exports to them exceed what the exports were to the United States when British colonies; and that, if that trade and those colonies be cherished as they deserve, the exports of manufactured goods to them in a few years will be prodigiously increased, and all the advantages which this country ever hoped to reap from the possession of the countries which now form the United States, by addition to our maritime strength and the consumption of our produce,

will, with proper management, in a few years, be realized from the present colonies.

With the same freedom that I have taken the liberty of remarking on the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, I shall now make a few observations on that of the House of Commons, appointed to consider of the means of maintaining and improving the foreign trade of the country; and I beg to be understood, in what I have to say, as not meaning any disrespect to the Committee, individually or collectively. My objections chiefly are to the application of speculative tenets of political economy to our navigation laws, without being supported by facts to justify the changes they propose in those laws, which, for nearly two centuries, have been the source of our maritime greatness.

The Committee state, that it appeared to them, that the means of attaining the object to which their attention had been directed by the order of the House, consisted less in affording any additional legislative protection or encouragement to the commerce of the United Kingdom with foreign states, than in relieving it from a variety of restrictions, which the policy of a former period imposed upon it. Before they enter upon the chief subject of their inquiry, they recommend a very judicious alteration in the present cumbrous, intricate, and perplexing mass of laws by which

commerce is now regulated ; and, should the legislature adopt their recommendation in this respect, and reduce those laws to some uniform and simple system, there can be no doubt but it will be highly beneficial to commerce. Nearly the whole of the remainder of the Report is dedicated to the discussion of those restrictions intended for the improvement of the navigation of the United Kingdom and the support of its naval power. The following extract will show the scope of their reasoning. “ A just respect
 “ for the political wisdom from which the enact-
 “ ment of the navigation laws originated, and a
 “ sense of the great national advantages derived
 “ from them in their effects on the maritime
 “ greatness and power of the kingdom, have ren-
 “ dered them objects of attachment and veneration to every British subject. Nor can your
 “ Committee suppose, that any suggestions they
 “ may offer, can lead to a suspicion of their being
 “ disposed to recommend an abandonment of the
 “ policy from which they emanated, or to advise,
 “ in favour of the extension of commerce, a re-
 “ mission of that protecting vigilance, under
 “ which the shipping and navigation of the king-
 “ dom have so eminently grown and flourished.
 “ The only question which, on this subject, they
 “ have entertained is, whether the advantages
 “ hitherto enjoyed by our shipping, might not be

“ compatible with increased facilities afforded to
 “ trade, and its relief from some of the restric-
 “ tions, which the provisions of these laws im-
 “ pose upon it. They are convinced, that every
 “ restriction on the freedom of commerce is in
 “ itself an evil to be justified only by some ade-
 “ quate political expediency; and that every
 “ facility that can be extended to it, is a benefit
 “ to the public interest, as leading, amidst the
 “ incalculable changes and accidents occurring
 “ in the circumstances of nations and of society,
 “ to the certain consequence of laying open new
 “ means of extension to mercantile ingenuity and
 “ enterprise, and disclosing to commerce new
 “ sources of eventual advantage, far beyond the
 “ power of human foresight distinctly to appre-
 “ ciate.” Nothing can show more clearly than
 the concluding sentence of this extract how much
 the Committee are in love with their favourite
 maxims of political economy, by which, notwith-
 standing the prudent and proper manner in which
 the first part of the extract is worded, they would
 fain throw down all barriers to the entire freedom
 of commerce; but I would just beg them to recol-
 lect, for one instant, that other nations are not at
 the present moment smitten with any such pro-
 pensity, and that they continue to be influenced,
 as all men and all nations have been in times past,
 by their interests, by their passions, and by their

prejudices; and our country having attained the very pinnacle of commercial greatness, it behoves the legislature to adopt no new system which may, in its consequences, undermine our naval power, unless the alteration, in all its parts, will bear the test of facts and experience. Every sober-minded man must be aware that commerce, in all its branches, is capable of complete analysis, and that, where there is an opening for a beneficial change, the particular commercial objects on which the change is intended to operate, can be clearly pointed out and defined. What, then, are we to think of the language just quoted, of so respectable a Committee, the Right Honourable the Vice-President of the Board of Trade in the chair? and which concludes thus:—"And disclosing to commerce " new sources of eventual advantage, far beyond " the power of human foresight distinctly to appreciate." I believe, that most persons will agree, that in the ordinary intercourse of mankind, any given source of commercial advantage can be distinctly appreciated and clearly pointed out.

The Select Committee next observe, "This " being the admitted principle," (I presume they mean that every restriction on commerce is in itself an evil, to be justified only by some adequate political expediency,) "it must be regarded

“ as subject to all the precaution, in its applica-
 “ tion, which interests, embarked under the faith
 “ of existing laws, and a due consideration of
 “ the difficulties attending an extensive change in
 “ a long established, though defective, system,
 “ ought prudentially to inspire.” From this ob-
 servation, the Committee give us to understand,
 that the navigation laws must be changed to meet
 their favourite principle; and, though they speak
 of precaution, they go on to recommend the im-
 portation into the United Kingdom, by British
 ships, of the produce of every part of the world,
 from every part of the world, without adducing
 a single fact to show the expediency of so sweep-
 ing an alteration. Mr. Nichol, in his evidence,
 clearly points out the considerable trade which
 has been carried on between the dominions of
 Turkey and Italy, though intended for the market
 of Great Britain, in consequence of the Greeks
 carrying produce so much cheaper than our ves-
 sels can afford to convey it; and a stronger ex-
 ample could not be given of what may be expected
 generally, if the proposition of the Committee,
 in this respect, should be adopted: it is evident,
 that it would give foreign merchants, and, through
 them, foreign shipping, an unfair advantage; and,
 though it would, no doubt occasionally benefit
 a few commission or speculative merchants in
 London, it would be at the expense of the regular

merchant, manufacturer, and British ship-owner. A. B. a merchant in London, having a house at Smyrna, charters a ship, and sends by her to that port, an assortment of British manufactures, to the amount of £20,000. A considerable part of the returns are made in silk. By some of those casualties, of every-day occurrence in mercantile affairs, perhaps, by contrary winds, or the operation of the quarantine laws, a supply reaches the opposite ports on the continent a month before his arrives: suppose the new laws of the Select Committee to be in operation, and the silk is immediately sent over here, and sold at a good price, and the foreign merchant is immediately encouraged to repeat his operation, and despatches another cargo of continental goods to Smyrna; whereas A. B. when his silk arrives, finds the market supplied, and that there is no longer any demand, even at a reduced price;—what follows? why, that A. B. is not in a situation to repeat his shipment, and that British manufacturers, and British shipping and navigation are thereby discouraged. The freight across the channel is a mere trifle, and, in itself, an operation of not more than a week, and, consequently, not to be named as a compensation for the loss of a voyage which embraces as many months as it does days, besides its other concomitant evils. Perhaps the Committee will say that such a case

may happen, but that it is not likely to be the habitual course of the trade; but I say, that it is an evil, with scarcely any accompanying good, and, as the object of all legislation should be good and not evil, I trust, the legislature will reject the proposition of the Select Committee, both as it regards Europe and the rest of the world. The following extract, from the Report of the Committee, will show, that the evidence of the parties examined, who are interested in the question, corresponds with what I have stated, though the Select Committee, upon *general reasoning, without adducing facts*, state, that they have found no reason to believe, that the probable consequence would be to incur the danger and disadvantages described. “ Yet those whose interests
 “ were more exclusively connected with British
 “ shipping, expressed considerable alarm, lest the
 “ proposed alterations should be followed by a
 “ change in the existing course of trade, by which
 “ their interests might be eventually affected; and
 “ represented, that if any benefit accrued to commerce by the increased facility afforded, it
 “ might be chiefly to the commerce of foreigners;
 “ and that the participation of British shipping,
 “ in the conveyance of the produce of the different parts of the world, might be confined to
 “ the transport from the ports of the continent to
 “ those of the United Kingdom, while the more

" valuable and extended navigation, devolved
 " upon the shipping of foreign states. Your
 " Committee have felt the importance of this
 " representation, and examined it with the at-
 " tention it appeared to deserve. They are
 " anxious that the commercial results they san-
 " guinely anticipate from the establishment of a
 " system more enlarged and liberal than that
 " under which the British trade has been hitherto
 " conducted, (of which this relaxation of the
 " navigation laws forms a part,) could not be
 " deemed a satisfactory compensation for any
 " serious hazard to which the interests of our
 " shipping might be exposed; but they have
 " found no reason to believe, that the probable
 " consequence of adopting the measure under
 " consideration would be to incur the danger
 " described, or to transfer to foreigners any
 " of the advantages now possessed by British
 " ships."

The Committee then proceed to quote instances
 in which similar relaxations have taken place;
 but, with submission, I would beg to state, that
 relaxations adopted under peculiar circumstances
 of war, to meet some temporary exigence or
 pressure, can never be cited with propriety in
 justification of a total repeal of any law in pro-
 found peace, without condescending to bring

forward any facts to show that the one case has any affinity or relation to the other.

But it does not suit the favourite theory of the Committee to state facts, or to name any articles of commerce or manufacture by which the commerce of the kingdom would be promoted by the adoption of their system. The truth is, such facts, like the silk already mentioned, would probably militate against them, and enable those to grapple with them, who are as anxious as the Select Committee to extend and improve the foreign trade of the country, but who think it neither wise nor prudent to risk the great maritime interests of the kingdom in speculative experiments. The Committee fill a considerable portion of their Report, by endeavours to show that the measure, as regards the India trade, would have no effect one way or the other, and then express their apprehensions that they may be wrong; but, if found to be so, that the law may be again modified or even revoked. But what would be the effect of a return to the old system, if once departed from? Certainly, tenfold irritation among foreign nations to any that now exists against us. The Committee say, “Notwithstanding your Committee are able to perceive no serious objection to the adoption of this measure, yet feeling it impossible to calculate with certainty all the bearings and conse-

“ sequences of an alteration so extensive in its
 “ operation, they should offer it with more dif-
 “ fidence, if they were not convinced that it is
 “ easily susceptible of modification, should cir-
 “ cumstances hereafter arise to render such a
 “ modification essential to the protection of any
 “ of the great objects to which every considera-
 “ tion of the national safety and power imposes
 “ the duty of inflexibly maintaining. Flowing, as
 “ this concession will do, from the spontaneous
 “ and liberal feelings of the British legislature,
 “ neither granted on the condition of advantages
 “ obtained from other states, nor guarded by any
 “ pledge of the public faith; should it be at-
 “ tended with consequences inconsistent with the
 “ regard due to those objects, it may, without
 “ affording the slightest ground for reasonable
 “ complaint, or the impeachment of our justice
 “ or liberality, be subject at any time to such
 “ modifications as may be required; or even, if
 “ necessary, be absolutely revoked.” Surely, from
 their own reasoning, if this measure has any
 effect at all, it will be prejudicial to British in-
 terests; and the Committee are much mistaken,
 if they think foreign nations will thank us for this
 spontaneous flow of liberal feeling, as they call
 it: those nations know very well that in these
 matters nations are governed like individuals by
 a sense of their own interests; and, though they

should benefit by it, they will never thank us for it, as they will ever believe, that if it had not been thought conducive to our interest in some way, if not directly, indirectly, it never would have been adopted. We have before us at this moment an instance of what may be expected from a spontaneous flow of liberal feeling in the conduct of the American government.

By a convention concluded with the United States, on the 20th of October, 1818, it was agreed, that the boundary line between the territories of his Britannic Majesty and the United States should be ascertained by a line drawn from the north-western point of the Lake of the Woods, to the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, and thence due west along that parallel of latitude from the Lake of the Woods to the Stony Mountains; and that the said line should form the southern boundary of the said territories of his Britannic Majesty: whereas, by the treaty of peace in 1783, it was agreed, that the boundary line should be ascertained by a line drawn from the north-western point of the Lake of the Woods west to the Mississippi, and thence by a line drawn along the middle of that river, until it shall intersect the northernmost point of the thirty-first degree of north latitude, and from thence by various rivers east to the Atlantic Ocean. By another article of the treaty of 1783, the naviga-

tion of the river Mississippi from its source to the ocean, shall for ever remain free and open to the subjects of Great Britain and the citizens of the United States. By the treaty of 1783, the United States were clearly limited to the eastern bank of the Mississippi, by which no doubt Great Britain reserved any claim it might have to the countries on the west of that river, and beyond the northern limits of Louisiana, which has never been acknowledged to belong to Spain; but, on the contrary, in the discussions with France, this country was always considered neutral and independent. This embraces the immense tract north of the Missouri; and though, no doubt, the American government would urge their claim to it as an appendage to Louisiana since their acquisition of that territory, and that they had actually for some time taken possession of it, yet neither Spain nor France could cede that to the United States which did not belong to themselves, and to which Great Britain had as good a right as any of them, and which right was tacitly acknowledged by the United States in the treaty of 1783. This concession of ours in the convention of 1818, and spontaneous alteration of the boundary line, are of considerable importance to the United States; for the abandonment by them of the right of fishing in some of the coasts and bays of Nova Scotia, are fully compensated by a

right granted to them in this convention, of curing fish on the unsettled coasts of Newfoundland, from which they were expressly excluded by the treaty of 1783. A full equivalent (and which very much alarmed many of our merchants in the Newfoundland trade), therefore, of curing fish in a better and more convenient place than they formerly enjoyed was given them, for any right which they agreed to relinquish; we must therefore look for some other motive to account for the conduct of our government in acceding to this extraordinary alteration of the boundary line; and as that motive is not apparent, we may presume that it was a concession which flowed spontaneously from liberal feelings towards the United States, from which we might look for a great deal of gratitude, and a great deal of good will. This boon, however, is no sooner obtained, than they adopt measures to compel us to allow them to become carriers, on an equal footing with ourselves, to our West India colonies. Before I state the grounds which ought ever to prevent us from granting them any such permission, I beg to repeat, that in the trade between the United States and the United Kingdom for the last year (1819), four-fifths of the whole were carried on in vessels belonging to the United States, and only one-fifth in British ves-

sels, the tonnage being 105,539 American, and 25,026 British.

After the peace of 1783, and when General Washington was at the head of the government, the people of the United States (with the exception, perhaps, of the states of New England) were quite contented that British ships should come and take their lumber and flour to our colonies; but no sooner did the French revolution break out and throw all Europe into a state of war and confusion, than the governors of the West India islands opened the ports to the American flag, for the importation of provisions and lumber. Shortly after, a treaty was negotiated by Mr. Jay, on the part of the American government; and an article was introduced, giving American vessels of seventy tons burden leave to trade to our colonies, but restricting them from carrying our West India produce to Europe from the United States, and limiting the duration of that liberty of trade to two years after the peace. The article was rejected by the American government, and its omission approved by ours, so that for some years afterwards they continued to trade under the governor's proclamations: till at last they thought to bring us to their own terms, by laying on a general embargo, to starve the West India Islands. This was a fortunate circumstance, as it forced the planters to raise

more provisions in their plantations ; and thus, with the assistance of our North American colonies, they became independent of supplies from the United States, and were enabled to dispense with them when the war broke out which soon after followed. During peace, all foreign shipping are excluded from our West India colonies (except small vessels that go from the neighbouring foreign colonies to trade under the Free-Port act) ; and who ever heard of any foreign state making a complaint of such exclusion ? the circumstance certainly never occurred, for the whole world, the American government excepted, sees clearly the perfect justice and propriety of our reserving the whole of that trade to British subjects.

Our West India colonies have cost our country an immense quantity both of blood and treasure, and a very great capital is embarked in their cultivation. They are, even in peace, a considerable expense to us ; and all the maritime powers of Europe are so impressed with a conviction of these facts, that an attempt, by any of them, to interfere with them, would be deemed by all the rest an act of the greatest injustice and rapacity. What pretensions, then, have the United States to expect that any ministers of this country should so far forget their duty as to grant them a participation in that trade, who

have just as good a right to it, and not a bit better, than the inhabitants of Norway and Sweden.

It is true, some of the other European powers admit the American flag with flour and lumber to their colonies; but these powers are at no expense to defend their colonies, in the event of war, and they have no North American colonies whatever: there is, therefore, no analogy between the other European colonies in the West Indies, and those of Great Britain in reference to this question. Every British subject who can judge of this matter, and who has the interest of his country at heart, must rejoice at the conduct adopted by the government of the United States, if he regards it only in an interested point of view; but as we all wish to live on terms of friendship and good-will with the Americans, as well as with every other people, we cannot but deeply lament the spirit which has dictated this non-intercourse with our colonies. A just sense of what is due to the dignity of our government,—to the welfare and prosperity of our colonies, both in the West Indies and in North America,—to the security of our naval power, and even to our peace and good understanding with the United States,—all these important objects demand that our West India colonies should now for ever be made totally independent of the United States.

The produce of Canada will soon be so great as to render it difficult to find a market for it; now, therefore, is the time afforded by the conduct of the American government to secure to the colonies that of our own islands. More wheat has of late been shipped from Canada than from the United States, so little have the North American colonies been encouraged to make flour.

Let a proper additional duty be laid, in our West India colonies, on all flour and lumber, the produce of the United States, and such a duty as will for ever secure to the British North American colonies the whole of the supply, and one great source of irritation between the United States and this country will be for ever set at rest. The American restrictive law will be speedily removed, and we shall hear no more of embargoes and non-intercourse acts.

One would have thought, that four-fifths of the carrying trade between this country and the United States would have satisfied them; but no, their ambition is insatiable: from Spain they get Florida, from France Louisiana, and from us all the country north-west of the Mississippi; and, having acquired some fame on the ocean, they seek to enlarge their maritime power at the expense of ours and of our North American colonies. Any other state might put forth as

equitable a claim. If their superior skill, their superior industry, or their superior good management, gives them the advantage in the carrying trade between the United Kingdom and the United States, they deserve it; and if so, they are welcome to it, the shipping of both countries being on an equal footing. But our West India colonies owe us a great debt of blood and treasure; and our North American colonies have stood by us, when the United States joined our enemies. These colonies, with our great coasting-trade arising out of our insular situation, are the main pillars of our maritime strength;—to these alone can we look for some permanency and stability. The state of the carrying trade with the United States, with Norway and Sweden, and by the recent law of the Cortes with Spain, proves that we cannot rely on our trade with foreign nations for an adequate supply of seamen for the navy, when our independence may be threatened. Let us hope, therefore, that our government may be sensible, that the policy now pursued by the United States, in regard to our West India colonies, though arising out of a bad grasping spirit, is the policy of all others, which a true sense of British interests would lead us to pray that they may long continue. 'It might have appeared invidious, or even harsh, to have taken decisive measures to secure to our

North American colonies that share of the supply of the West India colonies to which they are justly entitled. From that delicacy the American government has relieved us; and, in availing ourselves of this fair opening to cherish our North American colonies, we may be assured that we shall best consult all the great interests connected with British navigation and commerce.

From this specimen of conduct in a foreign government, I contend that no good is to be expected from adopting any relinquishment of a substantial right under the plausible pretext of gaining the good-will of foreign nations by a display of what are called liberal feelings. Such concessions will be ascribed to weakness, or a hope to join greater advantages in some other way, and will lead, as in the case before us, to greater and more unreasonable demands by those to whom the concessions are made.

I contend also, that if accidental circumstances had not induced the governors of our West India islands to open the ports to the American flag, and thus, by a few years experience, to have taught them the value of the intercourse, the present attempt to force a trade with them would never have been made; and, therefore, from this example, I have a right to say to the Select Committee, that if their projected alterations in the navigation laws be adopted (which God forbid),

it will neither be so easy nor convenient as the Committee imagine, if found to be injurious to the great interests to which they relate, to modify or to revoke them.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons will find ample room for extending and improving the foreign trade of the country, without speculating with our navigation laws; and they may be assured that they will conciliate the good-will of foreigners more by removing the vexatious local regulations and arbitrary conduct of Custom-House and Trinity-House Officers and pilots, as detailed in the evidence of Mr. Hall, than by relaxing the navigation laws *only* as regards British ships, which, I humbly incline to think, might, in some cases, give greater offence than the laws as they now stand.

Perhaps the wiser plan at present would be, to have all the laws respecting our navigation reduced into one simple system, agreeably to the recommendation of the Committee, and attempt no alteration in them till that be effected; and then only such amelioration as will make their operation uniform and consistent, as regards German produce from Germany, for instance, as stated by Mr. Hall.

The Select Committee state, that "if, contrary to their expectation, any of the apprehensions created by the proposed relaxation of the navi-

"gation laws should be realized, it is in the im-
 "provement and perfection of the warehousing
 "system they confidently anticipate an ample
 "compensation to every interest connected with
 "the shipping of the United Kingdom." I agree
 with the Select Committee, that the general com-
 merce of the country will be promoted by
 the extension of the warehousing or bonding
 system, on a liberal footing ; but I differ with
 them in regard to its affording an ample com-
 pensation for injury done by the relaxation of
 the navigation laws, inasmuch as I think the
 advantage to be derived from the warehousing
 system, may be temporary, and will assuredly,
 on a large scale, be chiefly confined to unsettled
 times ; whereas, should loss arise from the altera-
 tion of the navigation laws, that loss will be per-
 manent, and will strike at the foundation of our
 maritime power. I beg the Committee to observe,
 that in the detail of the evidence, almost every
 thing that is stated on the subject of making up
 and assorting cargoes, has reference to the trade
 with the Havannah and South America, includ-
 ing the Brazils, the independent parts, and Lima
 and Mexico. Before the present troubles in the
 Spanish parts, and the removal of the Portuguese
 Government to the Brazils, the British flag could
 hardly be said to have been admitted into any of
 those countries. Now is it wise to alter a funda-

mental law with a view to compensation from a trade with countries where nothing can as yet be said to have taken a settled form? Should those countries become independent, no doubt we shall have a great and beneficial trade with them, and it is our duty to cherish it: but we may, by the chapter of accidents, be entirely excluded from it; and, in the mean time, we are in the situation of neutrals to belligerents, and we have lately seen what the United States suffered by losing the neutral character they long enjoyed. Whilst, therefore, we pursue the mercantile intercourse with South America in the best manner circumstances will permit, let us not sacrifice our solid interests to a commerce that may prove quite temporary and evanescent. Even Java is open to British ships only because the Dutch have not enough to carry on the trade; but as soon as a few more years of peace shall give them a sufficient quantity, the ports will be closed to the British flag.

There is one branch of trade which, on every ground of reason and common sense, ought to be thrown open to British ships, and that is, the carrying trade between China and foreign countries. It is in vain, in such a question, to put forward any compact with the East India Company. Can the Directors of that Company pretend to hold the monopoly of a right which they

do not exercise? For what purpose is their monopoly granted, but for the benefit of the nation? and how can they reconcile the duty imposed on them, to use it for the general advantage of the country, with their carrying it into effect only as regards the home trade? The reasons assigned for continuing to deprive private ships of this trade, as regards the supply of the produce of China to foreign States, are perfectly futile. They are said chiefly to be two:—the danger of involving the India Company, or our Government, with that of the Chinese; and the facilities that might arise out of its extension for smuggling. With regard to the first, it is well known, that there is a considerable trade carried on between the Company's settlements in India and China, in what are called country ships, in addition to several other foreign nations. What disturbance ever occurred from any of these? Besides, the absurdity of this reason is apparent, from the circumstance, that by the very Act of Parliament which should open the trade, such regulations might be adopted, in regard to the conduct of the owners and officers, and likewise as related to the discipline of the crews, whilst in China, as would render their involving the Company or Government in any difficulty, next to impossible, without a miracle. And as to smuggling, whilst I am now writing, an Ameri-

can ship is at anchor at Cowes, from China, waiting for orders from London, to proceed with her cargo to the continent. Is it easier to smuggle from a British ship under bond, or from that American under no bond? or, when her cargo shall be landed at Amsterdam, will it be more difficult to smuggle it into England because it came to Holland in an American ship? The fallacy of those reasons is self-evident; and should the Company be so illiberal as to stand forward against the opening of this branch of trade, it is to be hoped all mercantile bodies throughout the kingdom will petition against the renewal of their monopoly of the home market.

The Select Committee, no doubt, in their next Report, will go into the subject of duties and prohibitions. I beg to add a remark or two on the duty lately imposed on foreign wool. It has been my endeavour to confine myself, as much as possible, to the facts which bear on the different topics on which I have taken the liberty to remark; and it occurs to me, that the duties at different times levied on silk may lead us to form a tolerably correct estimate of the consequences of tampering with manufactures, by raising a duty on the raw material of which they are composed. It is stated, in the evidence to the Report of the Select Committee, that this country has entirely lost the export trade in silk, in consequence of

the duty. All the accounts reported from Lyons, state the manufactures there to be in a most flourishing condition, and in a state of great activity. Now, it is the opinion of some of the manufacturers examined, that, in consequence of our connexion with India, we may procure the raw material on fully as good terms as they can in France ;—why not, then, put our manufacturers on a footing with those of France, by taking off the duty, if trade and manufactures be desirable? for, if the only impediment to our successfully competing with them in the silk trade be the difference in the price of labour, that will apply to all other branches of industry, woollens and cottons as well as silks ; and the stress laid on the comparative dearness of labour, by all the manufacturers who were examined by the Select Committee, ought to make an impression on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and caution him from treading on such dangerous ground. The duty on foreign wool, as far as it goes, gives the foreign manufacturers an advantage ; but will operate more injuriously still, by giving them confidence and energy to proceed in the career of competition, which is rising against us, in the article of woollens, in several parts of the continent. The reasons assigned by the Right Hon. Gentleman for persevering with the duty, in answer to Lord Milton's motion for its repeal, I

think, with submission to him, are not well-founded. The article of wool, as regards the agriculturists, in the measure that they can be benefited by the tax, is comparatively of small importance; and while I, for one, concur with ministers in thinking the United Kingdom should be independent of foreign states for bread, and that, for that purpose, in the present state of our internal economy, the corn laws are necessary, I can go no farther; but contend, that by granting the agriculturists this trifling advantage, by a duty on wool, you place an interest of tenfold importance in jeopardy. The Duke of Wellington will inform the Right Hon. Gentleman that a good general should not run a great risk for a trifling object. The view also which the Right Hon. Gentleman has taken of the trade with America is not quite correct; for though it be true that the trade of that country has been much affected by the alteration of its currency, and that that fact may account for part of its reduced demand for our manufactures, another important circumstance has been entirely overlooked by him in stating the comparative diminution in the export of woollens and cotton goods, namely, that the woollens have been generally imported for their own consumption, whereas a large proportion of the cotton and other manufactures used to be re-exported from the United States to the

foreign West Indies and South America, and which trade the Americans now have lost.

Believing the navigation laws to be essential to the independence of our country, and, in its present burdened state, the corn laws also ; and that, in the multifarious relations arising out of an extensive commercial intercourse with foreign nations, some regulations, in the nature of prohibitions or protections, are necessary, to adjust the conflicting and complicated interests of so great a commerce : if, therefore, we take independence as our polar star, we may take Adam Smith for our guide and compass, taking care so to shape our course as to avoid the shoals and quicksands thrown in our way by the laws and regulations of other states; always bearing in mind, in nicely balanced questions, the claims that are justly due to kindred and affection, and carefully distinguishing those sources of commerce which may be deemed fixed and permanent, from those which are transient and temporary, or from which we may be driven by the rivalry or caprice of other states.

Whilst nations continue, like individuals, to be governed by their interests, their passions, and their prejudices, however desirable in theory an entire free and unrestrained reciprocity of commercial intercourse may be, in practice it is quite visionary and chimerical. With these reserva-

tions, I do not hesitate to concur in the concluding sentence of the Report. "It is not to prohibitions and protections we are indebted for our commercial greatness and maritime power; these, like every public blessing we enjoy, are the effects of the free principles of the happy constitution under which we live. which by protecting individual liberty and the security of property, by holding out the most splendid rewards to successful industry and merit, has, in every path of human exertion, excited the efforts, encouraged the genius, and called into action all the powers of an aspiring, enlightened, and enterprising people."

After an encomium on our constitution so just and elegant, I am surprised that the Committee should not have proceeded to recommend the repeal of the Alien Bill, which, now we are at peace with the world, operates like a commercial restriction of the worst kind, by depriving foreigners who come to trade here, of their fair participation in the blessings the Committee have so well described; and by thus placing them out of the pale of the constitution, and exposing them to despotic power, they can no longer feel that entire confidence and freedom which should be the lot of every honest man who treads the British soil. It does not follow, that the absolute power, where it is lodged, should be abused; it

is sufficient that it is suspended over the heads of all foreigners, to produce an injurious effect; and being quite contrary to the spirit of our laws and constitution, it ought to be immediately repealed.

THE END.

Marchant, Printer, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street, London.

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